

World Report 2025 - Libya

Deep divisions persisted between Libyan parties while a fragile economic situation confounded efforts to reach a political settlement.

Two rival authorities in the eastern and western parts of the country vied for legitimacy and control, as affiliated armed groups and militias operated with impunity, increasing repression against civic groups and cracking down on free speech.

Survivors of major flooding in eastern Libya that claimed thousands of lives in 2023 faced a slow recovery, with hurdles getting equitable compensation, reconstruction support, and access to essential goods and services, including housing, health care, electricity, and education.

Migrants and asylum seekers, including children, arbitrarily detained in facilities controlled by armed groups affiliated with both governments or smugglers and traffickers, suffered inhumane conditions, torture, forced labor, and sexual assault.

Political Process

The Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU), appointed as an interim authority in 2021 through a UN-led process, controls western Libya alongside affiliated armed groups. Its rival, an armed group known as the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF), controls eastern and southern Libya alongside affiliated security apparatuses and militias, and a civilian administration known as the “Libyan Government.”

In March, the newly [appointed](#) Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and acting head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) restarted political talks between Libyan stakeholders.

[Talks](#) in [Tunis](#) in February and [Cairo](#) in July, between members of the rival eastern-based House of Representatives and the Tripoli-based High Council of State, did not reach consensus on [election laws](#). Elections originally scheduled for December 2021 have been postponed indefinitely after Libyan stakeholders failed to agree on a legislative and constitutional basis.

UNSMIL leads a process to consolidate [draft reconciliation laws](#) covering amnesties, reparations, truth telling, and justice between the Presidential Council, House of Representatives, High Council of State, and the Constitution Drafting Assembly. As of October, the unified draft law had not yet passed the House of Representatives and had not been put to a vote.

Armed Conflict

Armed groups and militias nominally operating under the Defense or Interior Ministries of the rival governments clashed frequently. Intermittent fighting between armed groups for control of resources persisted in western Libya and fighting in the capital Tripoli [killed](#) 10 people in February.

In May, [renewed clashes](#) between competing armed groups linked to the GNU killed one civilian and injured 22 others in Zawiya, west of Tripoli. In August, [heavy clashes](#) between armed groups killed at least nine people and injured others in Tajoura, east of Tripoli.

In the east, the LAAF obtained military [equipment](#), including tanks and other weapons, in violation of the UN arms embargo. In July, Italian authorities [intercepted](#) a shipment of Chinese combat drones destined for the LAAF.

Judicial System

Libya's criminal justice system remained riddled with serious due process concerns. Lawyers were unable to freely visit their clients in prison, were not informed of sessions ahead of time, and did not have free access to case documents. Judges, prosecutors, and lawyers remained at risk of harassment by armed groups. Military courts continued to try civilians.

Thirty articles in Libya's penal code provide for the death penalty, including for acts of speech and association. While military and civilian courts continued to impose the death penalty, no executions have been carried out since 2010. As of September, the total number of people with confirmed death sentences were 105, including 19 who were detained.

Detention

The Justice Ministry exercised at least nominal control over prisons, while armed groups and security agencies operated other detention facilities across the country. Inhumane conditions, including severe overcrowding and ill-treatment are prevalent at facilities run by different groups. Some 30 to 50 percent of prisoners held under the Justice Ministry were in provisional detention due to prosecution delays.

A number of people died in custody under troubling circumstances. Ahmed Abdel Moneim al-Zawi [died](#) on July 13 while in the custody of the Internal Security Agency in Ajdabiya in northeastern Libya. Political analyst [Seraj Daghman](#) died at the Benghazi General Directorate for Internal Security after seven months of arbitrary detention.

Four politicians and journalists arrested in connection with Daghman's case were [released](#) in August without charge, after 10 months of arbitrary detention accusing them of planning to [overthrow the army](#) without producing any evidence.

House of Representatives member Ibrahim al-Darsi remained missing after he [disappeared](#) in Benghazi in May. [Seham Sergewa](#), also a member of parliament, remained missing after LAAF-affiliated armed men abducted her from her Benghazi home in 2019.

International Justice

The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Karim Khan, [announced](#) in November 2023 his office's intention to complete active investigations in Libya by the end of 2025. In May, he [presented](#) the UN Security Council with a roadmap, including his intention to open an office in Tripoli. He said progress was made on crimes in detention facilities and the 2014 and 2020 conflicts, and said his office provided support to national investigations into crimes committed against migrants.

In April, ICC Deputy Prosecutor Nazhat Shameem Khan conducted an [official visit](#) to Tripoli and clarified that "the Office intends to move towards the judicial phase of its activities, while continuing to work on arrest strategies, preservation of evidence, support to national authorities, and ensuring its obligations to protect victims and witnesses."

[Saif al-Islam](#), son of Muammar Gaddafi and wanted by the ICC since 2011 for serious crimes, remained a fugitive. In October, the ICC [unsealed](#) six more warrants for commanders and other members of the al-Kaniyat militia.

Women's Rights

On November 6, the acting Interior Minister in Tripoli, Emad Trabelsi, announced that a newly established “morality police force” would impose wide-ranging measures targeting women and girls in western Libya without a legal basis, and in violation of their rights. These measures included restrictions on clothing and imposing wearing of the Hijab on women and school girls, banning social interactions between men and women who are not related or married, and requiring any woman who wished to travel to provide the written permission of a male guardian.

Freedoms of Assembly and Association

Libya’s [penal code](#) stipulates severe punishments, including the death penalty, for establishing “unlawful” associations and prohibits Libyans from joining or establishing international organizations without government permission. Civic groups are unable to operate independently while activists have been forced to self-censor or remain in exile.

Civic groups in Libya faced [restrictions](#) on their ability to operate due to legal impediments and a severe crackdown by armed groups, militias, and security agencies affiliated with the two rival governments. The Civil Society Commission, tasked with [licensing](#) civic groups, has far-reaching oversight and control over the internal functioning of groups. It can search groups’ headquarters, freeze bank accounts, suspend activities, or dissolve groups without a court order. Organizations must obtain its prior approval to receive funding, to conduct activities, or to communicate with foreign parties.

The [absence of a unified legal framework](#) compounded the situation. Civic groups submitted a [draft Associations law](#) in 2021 to the House of Representatives, but it was not passed. In [February](#), the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, alongside Libyan officials and civic groups, initiated a roadmap to adopt a rights-based legal framework for civil society.

Freedom of Expression

Armed groups, militias and, security agencies cracked down on dissent, and the targeting of political opponents and dissenting voices [accelerated](#).

In January, the LAAF-affiliated Internal Security Agency arrested and detained blogger [Maryam Al-Warfalli](#) in the southern city of Sebha, reportedly over Facebook posts criticizing the LAAF’s distribution of cooking gas in southern Libya.

On July 8, unidentified armed men abducted political activist Moatassim al-Areebi in the western city of Misrata and released him three days later, after calls for his release from [UNSMIL](#) and the [United States](#).

On July 11, the Internal Security Agency in Tripoli detained journalist [Ahmed al-Sanussi](#), who reported on alleged government corruption, releasing him on [July 15](#). The UN and the [European Union](#) had intervened and called for his release.

Derna Flooding

As of June, some 44,800 people remained [displaced](#) after a massive storm in September 2023 killed thousands and devastated eastern Libya, and Derna in particular. Libyan authorities have [failed](#) to provide adequate compensation and reconstruction support to survivors. Only the eastern administration tied to the LAAF offered limited one-time [compensation payments](#) to some victims, while refugees and migrants affected by the floods have been [excluded](#).

On July 28, the Derna Criminal Court [convicted](#) 12 Libyan officials to prison terms of up to 27 years for their role in the collapse of two dams upstream of Derna that caused the massive flooding. The officials did not include senior commanders and members of the LAAF who had managed the crisis response.

Economic Justice

In August, a political standoff between the GNU and Parliament Speaker Agila Saleh over the [Central Bank](#)'s leadership, triggered by months of disagreements over the budget, resulted in longtime Central Bank Governor Siddiq al-Kabir [fleeing](#) the country and suspending banking operations. In retaliation, eastern authorities shuttered oil fields and terminals. A new central bank governor was sworn in on September 30 following UN mediation and an [agreement](#) with the High Council of the State.

The suspension of banking operations froze issuance of letters of credit and deepened economic hardship in Libya. The suspension of crude oil sales, which represent [90 percent of Libya's exports](#) and its sole national income source, resulted in the [depreciation](#) of the local currency.

In February, the Tobruk-based House of Representatives established the Libyan Development and Reconstruction Fund, tasked with leading reconstruction efforts across the country. It [appointed](#) the son of Libyan National Army Khalifa Hiftar, Belqasim, as its chief. Despite major [re-construction](#) underway in Derna, including housing units, the Fund's planning and funding strategy lacks transparency.

Migrants, Asylum Seekers, and Internally Displaced People

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) recorded [over 760,000 migrants](#) in Libya as of July. As of September, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had over [77,000](#) asylum seekers and refugees registered in Libya. Over [180,000 Sudanese](#) refugees had [arrived](#) since April 2023, bringing the total of Sudanese refugees registered with UNHCR Tripoli to 55,447 as of December.

Tunisian forces continued to collectively [expel](#) migrants and asylum seekers, many of whom had been intercepted at sea, to the Tunisia-[Libya](#) border. As of August, 125,802 people were [internally displaced](#) in Libya. These included thousands of residents of Tawergha who were driven out by fighters in 2011. Many remained unable to return due to the [deliberate destruction](#) of the town and the scarcity of public services. They also include thousands of families forcibly displaced by the LAAF from [Benghazi](#), Ajdabiya, and Derna since 2014. In August, flooding after heavy rains in the southwestern region of Ghat [displaced](#) 7,000 people.

Migrants and asylum seekers continued to attempt to cross from Libya to Europe. As of December, 1,536 people were found [dead](#) or went missing in the central Mediterranean after departing Libya.

The European Union and member states continued to cooperate with abusive and sometimes dangerous Libyan Coast Guard forces, providing [supplies](#), technical support, and [aerial surveillance](#) to help them intercept Europe-bound migrants at sea. As of September, Libyan forces [intercepted](#) or rescued 16,466 migrants and asylum seekers and returned them to risks of serious harm in Libya.